MCALPIN COLLECTION

THE REASONS FOR Non-conformity EXAMINED and REFUTED, IN ANSWER To a Late LETTER from a MINISTER TO A PERSON of QUALITY,

SHEWING

Some *Reasons* for his *Non-conformity.*

LONDON,

Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Bishop's* Head in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1679.

REASONS

FOR

CONSTITUTING

EXAMINING and REPORTING

A NEW

LETTER from MINISTER

TO

PARSON of LOWTON.

LONDON:

Printed for R. Baker, Printer, at the Rising Head in St. Paul's Church-Yard. 1 7 3 .

AN ANSWER TO A LETTER from a MINISTER TO A *PERSON of QUALITY*,

SHEWING

Some *Reasons* for his Non-conformity.

BEING lately in a Bookseller's Shop with a design to gratifie my curiosity in perusing some of those many Pamphlets, which either a mistaken or factious zeal crowds into the World, I met with a Letter pretended to be writ from a *Minister* to a Person of Quality, shewing some *Reasons* of his Non-conformity. I have often observed this humour in some mean but vain people, who dare not look upon Persons of Quality, when they are present, to talk of them with great familiarity, as their peculiar Intimates and Confidents; an Art, whereby both Papists and Fanaticks think to conciliate great reverence to themselves.

However I was very glad to see this Pamphlet, which being a single sheet, was quickly read, and if it were thought requisite, as quickly answered, and indeed I expected either some new reasons of Non-conformity, or some new strength given to their old reasons; but upon a perusal of it soon discovered my mistake, and presently concluded, that such stuff as this could not be designed to satisfie a Person of Quality, but to impose upon the Injudicious Rabble, and that we must expect a new Letter of Reasons for Non conformity every week or fortnight, like the *Domestick Intelligence*, or Poor *Robin*: a way, which has been found very effectual to corrupt the minds of weak and unstable People. For which reason (though my other occasions would sufficiently have pleaded my excuse) I resolved in great charity to undertake this Gentleman, either to satisfie him, if he be an honest and Impartial Inquirer, or to use as great diligence to undeceive People, as he does to deceive them.

To let pass his Introduction, which I confess I can neither make Grammar nor Sense of, he tells us, that "three grand Declarations are required to be made "by all those who will conform: The First concerning "the Book of Common-Prayer, the second concerning "taking up Arms against the King, the third concern-"ing the Solemn League and Covenant. Now with "reference to all these (especially the first and last) I "have had hitherto insuperable objections against the "making any such Declaration.

I am heartily sorry, that any Men retain these Principles, and more that they dare to own them, and yet there were no great hurt in this, would but our Governours take the alarm, and consider what Indulgence is fit to be allowed those Men, who profess, that they have insuperable objections against declaring

ring Treason and Rebellion to be a sin, and that they dare not renounce that Covenant, which involved this Nation in a Bloudy War, which pull'd down Church and State, and ended in the Barbarous Murder of the best of Kings: for those who believe they are still under the obligation of that Covenant, must necessarily believe, that they are still bound to act over the same Villanies, when they shall have power to do it. But of this more, when our Author shall think fit to give us his objections against the two last Declarations, at present we are only concerned to vindicate the First, the Declaration concerning the Book of Common-Prayer.

And his great objection against this is a great mistake, or a disingenuous perverting the sense and meaning of the Declaration: The words are these. *I A. B. do declare my unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained and prescribed in and by the Book*, entitled, *The Book of Common-Prayer, &c.* Upon which words, he thus comments, *Surely words could not be devised by all the wit of man more comprehensive and more significant to testifie our highest justification and commendation of every point and syllable, of every rite and ceremony, of every matter and thing contained in the whole Book, and in every page and line of it.* B. L.

This he descants on at large and greatly triumphs in the unreasonableness and absurdity of such a declaration; and I confess, I am perfectly of his mind, and would be a Non-conformist to any Church in the World, that should require such a declaration from me: but then those very Arguments, whereby he proves the unreasonableness of such a declaration, do abundantly convince me, that this is not the sense and meaning of the declaration: And every man must be of my mind, who will but think so charitably of

his Prince and Parliament and the Convocation, as not to believe them to be all mad.

For would any men in their wits, who deny the Infallibility of Pope and Councils, (as he well obſerves the Church of *England* does) require ſuch an aſſent to any book of humane compoſition, as ſhall ſuppoſe it to be infallible: for ſo this declaration (according to that latitude of ſenſe he beſtows on it) ſuppoſes, that there is not the leaſt poſſible miſtake in the whole Book of Common-prayer, but that it is as infallible as the Bible, nay more infallible than any Copy of the Bible now extant in the World in any Language, in which there may be ſome poſſible miſtakes through the fault of the Tranſlators or Tranſcribers, as he obſerves, and as was before obſerved in the very Preface to the Common-Prayer-Book, that *in common equity there muſt be allowed a juſt and favourable conſtruction to all humane Writings, eſpecially ſuch as are ſet forth by Authority, and even to the very beſt Tranſlations of the Holy Scripture it ſelf:* which is a plain Argument, that they never deſigned ſuch a declaration of Aſſent to the Book of Common-Prayer, as excludes all poſſible miſtakes, and gives us a general rule not to expound Acts of Parliament, or Publick Declarations, (which are *humane writings ſet forth by Authority*) to an abſurd or impoſſible ſenſe. In like manner Queen *Elizabeth* in her Injunctions brands thoſe for *malicious Perſons*, who put ſuch *perverſe conſtructions* on the Oaths of Allegiance, as could not *by any equity of words, or good ſenſe be thereof gathered.*

And yet upon this miſtake our Author proceeds to ſhow the difference between old and new Conformity, and aſſerts, that *ever ſince our happy reformation, the Miniſters were not ſo ſtrictly enjoyned to declare their*

their unfeigned aſſent and conſent to all and every thing contained and preſcribed in and by the Book; but it was *only appointed to be read and uſed, and the Rites and Ceremonies of it duly to be obſerved*: which he calls their *moderation* and *piety*, very good words, and indeed too good not to be qualified and recalled, and therefore adds, *at leaſt their prudence and policy*: for he ſuppoſes, " that a great many hundreds, who con-
" formed in thoſe days, would not have conformed,
" had any ſuch declaration been required of them;
" and upon this account doubts not to declare, that
" preſent conformity is foreign and quite of another
" nature from conformity heretofore; conſcience be-
" ing now much more forced and violated by them
" in the Chair: which is ſaid to vindicate themſelves for diſſenting ſo much from many ancient Puritans, who though they diſliked many things, yet conformed and peaceably ſubmitted to publick Conſtitutions.

But this Perſon is either a great ſtranger to the Conſtitutions of the Church of *England* ſince the Reformation, or cannot but know, that if there were no ſuch publick declaration, yet there were publick ſubſcriptions required of the conforming Clergy, which is equivalent to a declaration; for he muſt be a man of a mighty ſqueamiſh conſcience, who will not declare that which he can and does ſubſcribe. For what he aſſerts, that there was no more required formerly of the Clergy, but barely to uſe and ſubmit to the Common prayer and the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, is notoriouſly falſe. In the Articles publiſhed by the Authority of King *Edw. VI.* this is one, " The Book, which of late
" time was given to the Church of *England* by the Kings *B. L.*
" Authority and the Parliament, containing the manner
" and form of praying and miniſtring the Sacraments in
" the Church of *England*, likewiſe alſo the Book of
ordering

" ordering Miniſters of the Church, ſet forth by the " ſame Authority are godly, and in no point repug- " nant to the wholeſome Doctrine of the Goſpel, but " agreeable thereunto, furthering and beautifying the " ſame not a little, and therefore of all faithful " members of the Church of *England*, and chiefly " of the Miniſters of the Word, they ought to be re- " ceived and allowed with all readineſs of mind and " thankſgiving, and to be commended to the People " of God: which as you ſhall hear more preſently is not inferiour to an *unfeigned aſſent and conſent*.

This Article indeed is left out of thoſe, which were ſet forth by the Authority of Queen *Elizabeth*, but inſtead of it, the Clergy were required to ſubſcribe this promiſe or declaration. " I ſhall read the " Service appointed, plainly, diſtinctly and audibly, " that all the People may hear and underſtand.

B. L. Advertiſements by the *Queen*.

In the Reign and by the Authority of King *James* were publiſhed the Conſtitutions and Canons Eccleſiaſtical, which are of force in the Church of *England* to this day: and it is ſufficiently known, that by the 36 *Canon*, every Perſon to be ordained or promoted to any Eccleſiaſtical Benefice, or Function, is required to ſubſcribe the Three Articles, the ſecond of which concerns the Book of Common-prayer, and of ordaining and conſecrating Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons, that it contains nothing in it contrary to the Word of God, and may be lawfully uſed, and that he himſelf will uſe that ſame form, and no other: from whence it appears, that there was ſomething more required of conforming Miniſters in thoſe days, than only to read the Book of Common-prayer, and to obſerve the Rites and Ceremonies of it, as this Author ignorantly aſſerts, for they were alſo required by ſubſcription to declare

clare their approbation of it, as fit to be uſed, and their promiſe, that they would uſe it.

But ſtill, they were not *ſo ſtrictly injoyned to declare their unfeigned aſſent and conſent to all and every thing contained and preſcribed in and by the Book.* Right, not in theſe very words, but to the ſame ſenſe: for to own, that there is nothing in the Common-prayer Book, which is contrary to the Word of God, and that it may be lawfully uſed, and that we will uſe it, is equivalent to an unfeigned aſſent, and conſent. No ſays our Author, for *Aſſent with reference to the party aſſenting relates to his underſtanding; and with reference to the thing aſſented to, it relates to the truth and rightfulneſs of it:* So again, *Conſent with reference to the party conſenting, relates to his will; and with reference to the thing conſented to, it relates to that goodneſs, expediency, behovefulneſs of it.*

A very wiſe and grave obſervation, as if I could not aſſent to the doing of what is to be done, as well as to the truth of a propoſition, or could not aſſent to the lawfulneſs of a thing, without aſſenting to it as every way fitteſt and beſt and moſt expedient; as if I could not conſent to ſubmit to the uſe of what is lawful and legally impoſed, without *chuſing every thing mentioned and preſcribed in the ſame Book, as moſt eligible and behoveful to be done, practiſed and obſerved,* as this Author is pleaſed to paraphraſe *an unfeigned Conſent.*

But to ſatisfie this Gentleman in the ſignification of theſe words *Aſſent* and *Conſent*, it may be convenient to give him Qu. *Elizabeth*'s interpretation of them, in the Preface to the Articles, *An.* 1504. " Whereupon " by diligent conference and communication, and at laſt " by *Aſſent* and *Conſent* of the Perſons before-ſaid, theſe " orders and rules enſuing have been thought meet and " convenient Biſhop *Sparrow*'s Collection.

" convenient to be uſed and followed ; not yet pre-
" ſcribing theſe rules as laws equivalent with the
" eternal Word of God, and as of neceſſity to bind
" the conſciences of her ſubjects in the nature of them
" conſidered in themſelves —— but as temporal
" orders meer Eccleſiaſtical, without any vain ſuper-
" ſtition, and as rules in ſome part of Diſcipline
" concerning decency, diſtinction and order for the
" time. So that the Queen, and the Arch-biſhop of *Canterbury*, and the other Biſhops in commiſſion with him, who drew up thoſe Articles, thought we might give our aſſent and conſent to orders and rules (and by the ſame reaſon to a Book of Common-prayer) as *only meet and convenient to be uſed and followed* ; and that we may give ſuch an *aſſent* and *conſent* to temporary rules, which are alterable at pleaſure, and therefore not ſuppoſed to be every way perfect, or not to have the leaſt error or defect in them.

And in this ſenſe the Act of Uniformity requires our unfeigned aſſent and conſent to the Book of Common-prayer, &c. that is to the uſe of it, as is expreſly mentioned immediately before this declaration: that every Miniſter ſhall *openly and publickly before the Congregation declare his unfeigned aſſent and conſent to the uſe of all things in the ſaid Book contained and preſcribed, in theſe words and no other.* I *A. B. do here declare*, &c. Now when the Act it ſelf limits the ſignification of theſe words, Aſſent and Conſent, only to the uſe, it evidently betrays a perverſe and malicious deſign, to affix ſuch a large ſignification on them, without the leaſt appearance of reaſon, as to render that declaration very abſurd and impious, or at beſt very ſuſpicious to honeſt men.

As for what he urges, that the Act it ſelf expounds *conſent* by *approve*, where it is ſaid of a Lecturer, that

he

he ſhall give his aſſent to, and approbation of the ſaid Book, and to the uſe of all the prayers, &c. I would fain know how it can be otherwiſe; for he, who aſſents and conſents, muſt approve, as far as he aſſents and conſents, but why cannot we approve of the uſe of a Book, or approve of a Book, as lawful to be uſed, as well as aſſent and conſent to the uſe of it? ſo that what our Author ſeems ſo paſſionately to wiſh, *that they had required no more in conformity than uſe and ſubmiſſion*, is indeed all, that is required of the conforming Clergy, and is all, that is neceſſary to be required to attain the end of that Act, which was to eſtabliſh uniformity in worſhip, that *there may be an univerſal agreement in the publick worſhip of Almighty God, and to the intent, that every perſon in this Realm may certainly know the rule to which he is to conform in Publick Worſhip*; which are the very words of the Act: but it has always been the practice of theſe men, to force another ſenſe upon the words of Oaths and publick declarations, than was ever intended by our Governours, on purpoſe to juſtifie their unjuſt clamours, and to countenance Schiſm and Faction.

See Mr. *Falkner's Libertas Eccleſ.* c. 3.

Having thus in general juſtified the declaration of unfeigned aſſent and conſent, it is time to conſider his particular exceptions againſt the Book of Common-prayer: And his Firſt exception is againſt reading *the Apocrypha as Leſſons for the day:* but he ought to have ſaid, for what day; for there is not one Leſſon out of the *Apocrypha* appointed for any Sunday throughout the year; and is it not great impudence in theſe men to reproach the Church of *England* for appointing the *Apocrypha* to be read ſometimes on the Week-days, who take no care themſelves, that either the Holy Scriptures or *Apocrypha* ſhould be read in their Conventicles all the week, nor ſcarce on Sundays; eſpecially conſidering,

that there is always one Leſſon out of the Canonical Scripture appointed to be read, beſides the *Apocrypha*, and I ſuppoſe they will not aſſert it abſolutely neceſſary every time we meet to worſhip God, to read two Chapters of the Holy Scriptures; for they themſelves very ſeldom read one on their weekly Lectures, whatever they do on Sundays: we pay much greater reverence to the holy Scriptures than our Accuſers do, as never meeting together for the worſhip of God without reading ſome portion of them; what is our fault then? not a neglect to read the Scriptures, but that ſometimes we read ſome part of the *Apocrypha* together with the Scriptures; and if this be all, it is no other fault, than what the ancienteſt and pureſt Churches have been guilty of: as is well known to thoſe, who are acquainted with the Hiſtory of the Chriſtian Church, and there are few Proteſtant Writers of any note, but have commended, or at leaſt allowed the reading of them. But they are *fabulous Legends*, ſuch as *of Tobit and his Dog, Bel and the Dragon, Judith and Baruch*: I ſuppoſe this Author does not know, that the 5 Ch. of *Tobit* is left out of our Kalendar, nor that many of the ancient Fathers did believe theſe to be true ſtories, though he is pleaſed confidently to call them fabulous Legends, I never ſaw any arguments yet to prove them Fables, but what would admit of a very fair ſolution, when this Author produces any, I ſhall conſider them: But ſuppoſing them to be fables, that is parabolical diſcourſes, they are never the leſs fit for that to be read in Chriſtian Aſſemblies, ſince they may ſerve for inſtruction, or comfort, or reproof, as the Parables of our Saviour do.

See *Falkners libertas Eccl. cb. 4. ſect. 5.*

But they are read under the notion of Holy Scripture, for ſo in the whole lump together they are ſtiled in the order, no note of diſcrimination to make any diſtinction be-

tween

tween one and the other: and has this Author then the impudence to charge the Church of *England* with making no distinction between the Canonical Scripture and the *Apocrypha*? if not, is it not done like a very good Christian, slicly to insinuate so foul an imputation as this? if he does think the Church guilty, let him tell me the meaning of the sixth Article of Religion, wherein our Church declares, *In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical Books, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.* B. L.

"And the other Books (as *Hierome* saith) the Church B. L.
"doth read for example of life and institution of man-
"ners, but yet doth not apply them to establish any
"doctrine. How is it possible for the best Church in the World to escape the envenomed Tongues and Pens of these Men, who do not blush to charge her with such doctrines, as are directly contrary to her own Articles? Had it not been more reasonable to assert, that the order takes no notice of the Apocryphal Lessons, than that it includes the *Apocrypha* in the common title of *Holy Scriptures*; which is the plain truth, for it only mentions the Lessons out of the old and new Testament, reckoning the *Apocrypha*, so well known, and so plainly discovered by the Kalendar, when it was once understood, that there was no need of particular directions about it.

There is one objection more with reference to the Kalendar, that *some Books of the Sacred Canon are wholly left out, and never to be read, some of them within a very little, some of them but half to be read, and many of them mutilated and curtailed as to several chapters contained in them.* Now to show you of what force this objection is, let us first consider how much of the Holy Scripture is appointed to be read every Year by our Church: The Psalms of *David* are

read over every Month, the moſt part of the old Teſtament once a Year, the new Teſtament excepting the *Revelations* thrice every Year, beſides Epiſtles and Goſpels: And have not theſe Men great reaſon to find fault with our Kalendar, who don't read the tenth part of the Bible once a Year in their Conventicles?

Secondly, the deſign of publick reading the Scriptures, is for publick inſtruction, and therefore the Church may very prudently leave out ſuch parts of Scripture, as are dark and obſcure, and not eaſily underſtood without an Expoſitor, or have not ſuch an immediate influence upon the government of our lives, and reſerve them to be read by Chriſtians at home, or to be expounded to the People by publick Teachers: and ſuch for the moſt part are thoſe omiſſions, which this Author complains of; dark and obſcure Prophecies or Genealogies, or ſuch Hiſtories, as are related in ſome other Books, which are appointed to be read.

And now Thirdly, I would deſire this Gentleman to prove, that it is abſolutely neceſſary to read the whole Scripture in our Churches; if it be, let our Diſſenters firſt correct themſelves, before they cenſure thoſe, who are more juſt and innocent; if it be not, then it is no fault to omit ſome parts of Scripture, which are leaſt fitted to the edification of a promiſcuous multitude, while nothing is omitted, which is neceſſary to their inſtruction in Faith and manners: and when he ſhows any ſuch omiſſion, I will refuſe to conform too.

Falkners libertas Eccl. ch. 4. ſ. 5.

To conclude this argument, it is well obſerved by a Learned man, that "the ancient *Jews*, who divided "the old Teſtament into the Law, the Prophets, and the "Hagiographa, did for a long time only read the Law "in the Synagogues, after which only a Section of the "Prophets

"Prophets was added; but that the Hagiographa "(which included all the Books from the beginning of "the Chronicles to the end of the *Canticles*, beſides "*Ruth*, *Lamentations* and *Daniel*) were not read in the "Synagogues, hath been obſerv'd from the *Talmudiſts*: "and this is agreeable to divers paſſages of the new Te- "ſtament, *Luk.* 4. 16. *Acts* 13. 15, 27. *Act.* 15. 21. "yet Chriſt and his Apoſtles blamed not the *Jews*, but "joyned with them in this Service. Such a vaſt diffe- rence is there between the temper of our Lord and his Apoſtles, and our Phariſaical Schiſmaticks.

His next objection is againſt *the order appointed for the Miniſtration of Baptiſm*, which is divided into three Branches.

Firſt, that *he does not approve of the ſtrict requiring of God-fathers and God-mothers to ſtand as Sureties and Undertakers for the Child to be baptized*, viz. *that he ſhall renounce the Devil and all his works, and conſtantly believe God's holy Word, and obediently keep his Commandments*: His objection is againſt the *ſtrict* requiring of this, and yet it is not ſo *ſtrictly* required, as to make it eſſential to the nature of Baptiſm, as is evident in private Baptiſm, which is declared valid without it: but let us hear his Reaſons againſt this.

Firſt, that *it is unſcriptural*: but it is not contrary to Scripture, and that is anſwer enough, till he can prove, that the Church has no power to appoint any Ceremonies or obſervances, but what are expreſly warranted by Scripture, eſpecially this being an ancient practice both in the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Church; and as the *Leyden* Profeſſors think (Perſons whom I know our Author reverences) countenanced by Scripture alſo, *Iſai.* 8. 2, 3. as has been before obſerved by Mr. *Falkner*. *Synop pur. Theol. diſp.* 44. *n.* 54.

His ſecond objection againſt God-fathers, is, that *the*

the Father of the Child is left out, if not wholly thruſt out; a great fault this, but how does he prove it? becauſe, *he is not mentioned, nor taken notice of at all, in that publick ſtipulation, as if he had no concern in it*: a very wiſe argument! I borrow a Hundred Pounds, two of my Friends are bound for the payment of it, without taking any farther notice of me, than that the Money was lent to me, *Ergo*, I am diſcharged of this debt, becauſe other Perſons have given a Bond for it, and I have given none: The obligation of Parents to educate their Children is founded on the Laws of Nature and Religion, and acknowledged by all Mankind without an explicite ſtipulation; the obligation of Godfathers is voluntary, and therefore requires an expreſs promiſe, and is deſigned as an additional ſecurity to the Church for the religious education of Children baptized.

His third objection is, that God-fathers do not keep this promiſe, but involve themſelves in the guilt of *lying* and *perjury*: this I muſt acknowledge to be a great fault, and I fear too many are chargeable with it; but this is the fault of the Men, not of the Conſtitution: it is a demonſtration of great prudence and piety in the Church, by all poſſible ways to ſecure the vertuous education of Children, who are baptized in their infancy, that the Church may not hereafter be ſcandalized with the ignorance and vices of ſuch untaught and undiſciplined Chriſtians: the preſumption of a religious education is neceſſary to give any Child a right to baptiſm, and therefore it is very commendable in the Church to take collateral ſecurity, where it may be had, as well as the direct ſecurity of Chriſtian Parents: Did our Church exact any promiſe and engagement from God fathers, which could not be kept, ſhe might be charged with the guilt of their *lying* and *perjury*,

perjury, as he calls it; but when the promise may easily be performed, and is nothing but what one Christian Friend ought to do for another, when occasion requires, without such a promise, let every Man bear the guilt of his neglect, without reproaching the most prudent and wholesome Constitutions.

His second exception against the order of Baptism, is against the use of the sign of the Cross, but his objections against this are so very trifling, that they will give an answerer no great trouble: he knows not how to understand those words *in token*, when the Child is signed with the sign of the Cross, *in token that he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified*: why, what difficulty is there in understanding this word *token*, which is a plain English word, and familiarly understood by plain English-men? but if he wants a comment, he may take Bishop *Morton's*, that *it is a declarative token of duty, which afterwards the baptized person ought to perform, &c.* but *he believes the generality may mistake in token*, for *in vertue and power of this sign*: but I believe, he suspects the generality to be more silly than they are, till their understandings are debauched with fanaticism, and I need not tell him, who may be thanked for that: but the way of these Men is to put scruples and whimsies into Peoples heads, and then to cry down the most innocent and sober usages, for fear of giving *an occasion of misunderstanding to the vulgar and injudicious*: but let them look to that, to remove the scruples they have made, or to bear the guilt of them. *Defence of three Cerem.*

The sum of his next objection is this: that Baptism it self *obliges the person baptized to confess the faith of Christ crucified*, and exhibits vertue and power to that purpose, and therefore those words *in token*, &c. should be more properly and immediately after Baptism, and not after

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ter ſigning with the ſign of the Croſs, *as if baptizing with water were not ſufficient of it ſelf, but more over the ſign of the Croſs needful to bind the Conſcience and confer the bleſſing ------ which is too too like a Sacrament upon a Sacrament:* where we may obſerve the ſlineſs of this Author, who would fain inſinuate a charge, which he dares not own: This adding the ſign of the Croſs to Baptiſm is, *as if baptizing with water were not ſufficient of it ſelf, and is too too like a Sacrament upon a Sacrament:* Speak out man, is it ſo, or not? does the Church of *England* make the ſign of the Croſs eſſential to Baptiſm, and that Water-baptiſm is imperfect without it? here his courage fails him, as not daring to aſſert ſo known a fallehood: the Church of *England* having ſo expreſly declared the contrary in the XXXVI. Canon, and in her Rubrick after the Office for private Baptiſm, where the Child privately baptized without the ſign of the Croſs, is declared to be *lawfully and ſufficiently baptized, and ought not to be baptized again:* The ſum then of his argument is this, that he dares not approve the ſign of the Croſs, becauſe the uſe of it after Baptiſm may by a perverſe interpretation ſeem to be what it is not, and what he dares not affirm it to be.

It is ſome comfort, that this Writer acknowledges in the next Paragraph, that the Primitive Chriſtians did uſe the ſign of the Croſs, as indeed they did, both in adminiſtring Baptiſm, and upon divers other occaſions, which one would think, might juſtifie the Church of *England* in conforming to a Primitive practice; but what he adds, that they did it *to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the Pagans, who ſcorned the Croſs, together with every ſign and token of it*; is never alledged as the reaſon of this practice by the ancient Chriſtians, who did not uſe this ſign to diſtinguiſh them-

themſelves from *Jews* and *Pagans*, (though every peculiar uſage, for what reaſon ſoever it be taken up, will neceſſarily prove a note of diſtinction) but to declare, that as much as a crucified Chriſt was ſcorned both by *Jews* and *Heathens*, they were not aſhamed of the croſs, but did put their whole truſt and confidence in their crucified Lord, and were ready, when ever God pleaſed to call them to it, to be conformed to their ſuffering Head; and this is a perpetual reaſon for this uſe, while the Church has any enemies, and it is never like to be without, while there are either Atheiſts, or Fanaticks, or Papiſts. That the ſign of the croſs has been abuſed by Papiſts to idolatrous purpoſes, is no better argument againſt uſing the ſign of the croſs, than it is againſt owning the croſs it ſelf; for in uſing the ſign of the croſs, we only own the croſs, that is, we profeſs to own a crucified Lord, and the Doctrine and Religion of the Croſs. But this Perſon is much miſtaken in the temper of the Church of *England*, which neither does any thing, nor leaves any thing undone, meerly for a note of diſtinction and ſeparation; that is a piece of vanity and affectation which is peculiar to Phariſees, and ſome other People, who are very like them.

He has one objection more againſt the order of baptiſm, which refers to the Rubrick at the end of that Office: Viz. *It is certain by Gods word, that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual ſin, are undoubtedly ſaved.* Now had I a mind to wave this diſpute, I might tell him, that we do not give our aſſent and conſent to this Rubrick, becauſe though it be *contained in*, yet it is not *preſcribed by* the Book of Common prayer, that is, it is never to be uſed, and we aſſent and conſent only to the uſe of thoſe things, which are both *contained in* and *preſcribed by* that Book: but ſince this is evidently the doctrine of our Church, as

appears both from the Homilies, and several passages in the Office of Baptism it self, I shall briefly consider his objections against it.

And first, he wishes *they had quoted the place*, where this is affirmed in Scripture; for he knows not where to find it; and I would desire him to tell me, whether nothing be undoubtedly certain by Scripture, but what we have an express Text for, if not, we must reject the Baptism of Infants too, which will put an end to the dispute concerning their salvation, when baptized.

If those who are regularly admitted into the Church of Christ, have a right to the blessings of the Covenant, then they have a title to salvation; if they have not, then Baptism is an insignificant ceremony, and not the Seal of a Covenant, which I suppose our Author will not easily affirm, no, not to oppose the Church of *England*. I say, those who are regularly admitted by baptism, for so our Church supposes, which answers most of his captious and impertinent queries.

If the Children of very bad Parents be regularly admitted by baptism, or to speak plainer, may be lawfully baptized, as in some cases no doubt they may, we must acknowledge they receive the benefit of baptism too; but if any are baptized, who have no right to baptism, we are not bound to prove, that baptism shall be of any advantage to them: no more than that a Child shall inherit an Estate by vertue of an illegal or fraudulent conveyance.

Thus the supposition of a Christian King baptizing the Children of *Pagans*, *Turks*, *Jews*, by the same force by which he conquered their Parents, concerns more the legality of the Act, than the vertue of the Sacrament, for where-ever the Sacrament is lawfully administred, it will have its due effect.

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It is a very pretty objection against the vertue of baptism, that it supposes it to be *in the power of a man to make Infants sure and certain of salvation*; viz. by murdering of them, as soon as they are baptized, and accordingly, he teaches Whores a more charitable way of murdering their Infants, to baptize them first, that so their Souls may be saved, which is true Fanatick talk, and proves the objector to have more need of good Physick, than a serious answer; for let him put the case, as odly, as he pleases; Children that are lawfully baptized, are in Covenant with God, and have a good title to salvation, and those, who murder them send them to Heaven, as other Murderers do all the good men they kill. He asks just such another raving question; *May a Minister, since baptizing gives such an unquestionable title to Heaven, deny or suspend the ordinance to any Infant whatsoever, if he might be permitted to administer it?* if by permission, he means a legal permission, according to the terms and conditions of the Gospel, the answer is plain, that he ought not to deny it, that is, a Gospel Minister ought not to deny Baptism to any Infant, who has a just right to it; if he means any other permission than this, the Man is mad, and needs no other answer; for we don't suppose, that Baptism works like a spell or charm to whomsoever it be applied, but its vertue depends upon a Divine institution, and therefore requires persons duly qualified to receive it.

But he strangely aggravates the cruelty of those Ministers, who refuse to baptize Children, and consequently keep them under a suspicion of damnation, because their Parents *scruple God-fathers and God-mothers, and the sign of the Cross*, such an one, he says, *deserves if possible to be unchristened himself again, and turned among Cannibals, as one more deeply dipt, and baptized in*

their barbarous inhumanities; and adds, *and yet if he be a true Son of the Church, and punctually observe his prescribed rule, he must not baptize any Infant without God fathers and God-mothers, without signing it with the sign of the Cross, whether it be saved or damned*; ought not this Man of conscience, nay of a tender conscience, to have been very sure this charge had been just, before he had condemned the whole Clergy of the Church of *England*, to be *turned among Canibals*? and yet nothing can be more palpably false, for the Church of *England* has expressly ordered her Ministers, as is plain in the form of private Baptism, to baptize Children without God fathers and God-mothers, or the sign of the cross, where there is any apparent danger of death, and therefore it must be the Parents fault, how scrupulous soever he be, not the Ministers, if his Child die unbaptized. I know not what remark to make on this, but shall leave it to himself, and every impartial Reader to think on it.

But yet, I must farther observe, that to assert the salvation of baptized Infants, does not deny salvation to all that are unbaptized, though we are not so certain from the Word of God of the salvation of the one, as of the other: the salvation of baptized Infants depends on an express Covenant, but we have the goodness and clemency of the divine nature, as a reason to hope well of others, especially of the Children of Christian Parents, who were born within the Pale of the Church, and were designed by their Parents to be made the visible members of it.

Nor is the denial of Christian burial to such Infants as die unbaptized any argument, (as he suggests) that our Church doubts of their salvation, but only, that she does not own them as actual members of the Church, as no Persons are, who are not actually admitted into the

the Chriſtian Church by Baptiſm: and poſſibly this may be deſigned as an act of Diſcipline to correct the neglect of Parents, and to beget in them a greater veneration for the Chriſtian Sacraments.

His laſt objection is againſt the office for the burial of the Dead: in which we find theſe words, *foraſmuch as it hath pleaſed God of his great mercy to take unto himſelf the Soul of our dear Brother here departed*, &c. where taking them to *himſelf*, he ſays, muſt ſignifie taking them *into Heaven, if we believe the Lords Prayer, Our Father, which art in Heaven*; but is God no where elſe then, but in Heaven, becauſe he is there in an *eminent manner*? does not the wiſe man tell us, that *the ſpirits of men departed, return unto God, who gave them*, *Eccl.* 12. 7. Does that ſignifie going into heaven? then we have Scripture for it, that all men are ſaved, for the Spirits of all Men after death return to God.

To return to God, and to be *taken to him*, ſignifies to be put into the immediate diſpoſal of God, which as a Learned man well obſerves, "Our Church acknowledgeth to be an act of mercy in God, through "the grace of Chriſt, *who hath the Keys of Hell and "Death*; that dying perſons do not forthwith go into the power of the Devil, who had the *power of "Death*, *Heb.* 2. 14. but do immediately go into the "hands of the great God, and our Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt* "to be diſpoſed of by him according to the promiſes and conditions of the Goſpel-Covenant, agreeable to the ſenſe of the ancient Church, which in "the Offices of Burial, magnified the divine power, "whereby the unjuſt and Tyrannous power of the "Devil was overcome, and our Lord receiveth us, "ὅπι τὰ δικαῖα δικαιώτατα κρίματα, to his peculiar "and moſt righteous judgment. *Falkners libertas Eccl. ch.* 5. *ſ.* 9.

But

But ſtill he urges that other expreſſion, that *we commit his body to the ground, in ſure and certain hope of the Reſurrection to eternal life*, which words (he tells us) *muſt neceſſarily be ſpoken with reference to the perſon, then interred, inaſmuch as they are the continuation of the foregoing declaration*, viz. *God's taking his ſoul to himſelf. Committing his Body to the ground*, muſt indeed neceſſarily refer to the perſon interred, but there is no neceſſity every thing that follows ſhould, for it is not *his*, but *the* Reſurrection to life, we declare our hope of, our Church thinking it fit on ſuch a ſad occaſion as this, to declare their hope of a future Reſurrection; and ſince *God's taking his Soul to himſelf*, does not neceſſarily infer the ſalvation of ſuch a perſon, as I have already ſhewed, we cannot thence infer that the Reſurrection to life refers to the interred perſon neither.

But he has found one paſſage, which he ſays, *puts it out of all doubt*, (that when we bury a *known Adulterer, Fornicator, Drunkard, we declare and avouch that his ſoul is aſſuredly gone to Heaven*) viz. that in the prayer after burial, *that when we ſhall depart this life we may reſt* in him, (viz. *in Chriſt*) *as our hope is, this our Brother doth:* this I grant refers to the interred perſon, but is no argument, that the former expreſſions do, for this is only a judgment of charity, which differs much from *a ſure and certain hope*. There are various degrees of hope, and ſome of them ſo little, that we can hardly deny them to any perſon, though never ſo wicked; for where we are not abſolutely ſure, that they died wholly impenitent, we have ſome degree of hope, and though we have reaſon to fear this of too too many, yet we are ſeldom ſo certain of it, as to exclude all hopes of the contrary.

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But as a fuller juſtification of our Church in this matter, we may conſider, that this Office of Burial ſuppoſes, that the Perſon interred died in the Communion of the Church; and were Church-cenſures duly adminiſtred, as this Office preſumes them to be, and as certainly they would be, were not the Church weakned by powerful Schiſms and Factions, no Man could die in the Communion of the Church, but ſuch as we ſhould have very good reaſon in the judgment of charity to hope well of; and ſince, through the decay of Diſcipline, many die in the Communion of the Church, who deſerved excommunication, I doubt not, but who-ever ſhall leave out that ſentence, *as our hope is, this our Brother doth*, at the Burial of ſome notorious profligate ſinners, complies with the intention of the Church, and may juſtifie himſelf to his Superiours for doing ſo.

Having thus examined, and, as I think, anſwered this Miniſter's objections againſt Conformity, I muſt now look back, and take notice of the only piece of ingenuity he has been guilty of throughout this Pamphlet; and that is, where he owns the lawful uſe of an *eſtabliſhed Liturgy, or preſcribed form of publick prayers*; nay, that as he *ſays nothing againſt a Liturgy, or preſcribed form of publick prayers in the general, ſo neither againſt the main doctrine contained in the prayers of this Book of Common-prayers in particular*: and in requital of this, I ſhall as readily acknowledge what he adds, that *it is quite another thing to be bound up to declare my unfeigned aſſent and conſent to all and every thing contained in the Book*, (but he ought alſo to have added, and *preſcribed by the Book*) *together with thoſe prayers*: that is, that there is a real difference between that conformity, which is required of a Clergy-man, and that which is required of a Lay-

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man: but the use I would make of this acknowledgment is this, that according to this Minister's judgment, whatever objections there may be against conforming as a Minister, there are none, or such as he thinks not worth mentioning, against conforming as a private Christian, since both a form of prayer in general is lawful, and in particular those forms, which are prescribed in our Book of Common-prayers: the natural inference from which is, That nothing he has said in this Paper ought to dissuade private Christians from conforming to the Church of *England* by his own confession, which I hope all sober Christians will observe.

THE END.